

Message Text

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DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE

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SUBJ: HIGHLIGHTS OF AGRICULTURAL OBJECTIVES NOTED IN
BREZHNEV'S SPEECH

1. LEONID BREZHNEV'S SPEECH AT ALMA ATA MARCH 15 TO COMMEMORATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VIRGIN LANDS PROGRAM REFLECTED AGAIN THE CONTINUED HIGH PRIORITY GIVEN BY THE SOVIETS TO AGRICULTURE, AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE LAND RESOURCES NEEDED FOR SUSTAINED GROWTH.

2. BREZHNEV GAVE PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THREE ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE; IMPROVING THE AGRICULTURAL LAND BASE, RAISING LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION, AND INTEGRATING THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF STATE AND COLLECTIVE FARMS.

3. THE ANNOUNCED PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING THE AGRICULTURAL BASE IN THE SOVIET UNION SUGGEST A RENEWED EFFORT TOWARD DRAINAGE, IRRIGATION, AND LAND RECLAMATION IN THE NON-BLACK SOIL ZONE. ACCORDING TO BREZHNEV A STUDY OF THE NON-BLACK SOIL POTENTIAL AND GROWTH WAS RECENTLY COMPLETED FOR THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE INCLUDED HIGHER INPUTS AND THE FURTHER INTENSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT IN THIS AREA. IN HIS SPEECH BREZHNEV STATED THAT SOME 35 BILLION RUBLES HAVE
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BEEN ALLOCATED FOR THIS PURPOSE IN THE NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN.

4. EXPANDING LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTS IS THE REAL GOAL OF THE PROPOSED LAND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM. AND PRODUCING THE GRAIN AND FEED NEEDED TO SUPPORT A GROWING LIVESTOCK POPULATION ON A FIXED LAND BASE IS THE IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM CONCERN OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE. ALTHOUGH BREZHNEV DID NOT MENTION IT DIRECTLY, THIS CONCERN IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE ECONOMIC THINKING OF AGRICULTURAL SPECIALISTS.

5. SOIL SCIENTISTS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAVE SHOWN ALARM ABOUT THE CONTINUED LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO INDUSTRY OVER THE PAST DECADE AND SOCIOLOGISTS HAVE SHOWN GREATER INTEREST IN POPULATION GROWTH AND THE EFFECTS THAT A SHRINKAGE OF THE LAND BASE HAS ON THE CAPABILITY TO SUPPORT THIS POPULATION GROWTH. ONE STUDY INDICATES THAT ABOUT 100 MILLION HECTARES OF NEW LAND WOULD BE NEEDED BY THE YEAR 2000 TO MAINTAIN EXISTING CONSUMPTION LEVELS WITHOUT A SIMULTANEOUS BREAKTHROUGH IN CROP YIELDS.

6. THE FARM ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES ALLUDED TO BY BREZHNEV SUGGEST A FURTHER EXPANSION OF PROGRAMS ALREADY UNDERWAY IN SOME AREAS-- GROWTH OF LIVESTOCK COMPLEXES NEAR URBAN AREAS AND GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN COLLECTIVE AND STATE FARMS. THE AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEXES MENTIONED ARE A DIRECT OUTGROWTH OF THE URGENCY TO INTRODUCE EFFICIENCY IN LIVESTOCK FEEDING AND INCREASING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY ON FARMS.

7. NEW TECHNOLOGY ALSO REMAINS HIGH ON THE LIST OF OBJECTIVES TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURE AND INNOVATIVE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES ARE A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THE PROPOSED RESTRUCTURING OF AGRICULTURAL FARMS AND ENTERPRISES.

8. THE GOALS ARE HIGH BUT FEEDING A POPULATION OF 350 MILLION PEOPLE BY THE END OF THE CENTURY ON A FIXED RESOURCE BASE CAN NOT BE DISMISSED TOO LIGHTLY.
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